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THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106
TELEPHONE: GARFIELD 1-7340

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7000 YEARS OF IRANIAN ART
COMING TO CLEVELAND

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A comprehensive exhibition of Iranian art treasures, containing rare, historically valuable objects as well as important, recently-excavated ones, opens February 17 in the special exhibition galleries at The Cleveland Museum of Art. It will close March 28. The collection is lent by the Iranian Government to tour eight cities in the United States, and is of a range and quality not seen in the United States for twenty years.

The exhibition was assembled with the help of the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service, Washington, D.C. and the State Department. It presents nearly 740 objects including metalwork, pottery, rugs, textiles, glass, lacquer work and paintings, all fashioned by Iranian artisans over a period of 7000 years.

Among the most spectacular items are those of precious metal -- particularly a series of gold vessels and jewelry from Amlash, Marlik, Ziwiye and Hasanlu, the latter yielding the famed 9th century Hasanlu gold bowl, discovered in 1958.

The works were selected by Dr. R. Ettinghausen, curator of Near Eastern Art at the Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C., who borrowed 225 objects from the collection of the Archeological Museum in Teheran and by Roman Ghirshman, Director of the French Archeological Mission in Iran, who chose approximately 500 objects from the private collection of Mme. L. Foroughi of Teheran.

The work in the exhibition is divided into two categories: pre-Islamic (4000 B.C. to 635 A.D. when Iran was completely conquered by the Arabs and Mongols) and Islamic (mid-7th century to now). In the first division all the major art periods are represented; in the latter, about six periods, extending to the end of the 19th century, are represented.

Pre-Islamic art was concerned with animal or human forms, sometimes abstracted, and usually embodied by design or shape in painted pottery, gold, silver and

glass vessels, bronze, stone and clay sculpture, jewelry, reliefs and textiles.

The period between the pre-Islamic years and the Islamic invasion (mid-4th century B.C. to mid-7th century A.D.) produced art with notable western influence (especially Greek and Roman). After the conquest, Iran managed not only to continue its artistic production but also to begin to achieve even greater mastery, notably in book illumination, calligraphy, textiles, pottery, metals, lacquer work, and, miniature painting, which reached heights during the 15th century never surpassed. From the mid-18th century to the end of the 19th, magnificent portraits, revealing court splendor and wealth, were executed.

An illustrated catalog, with text, is available.